

A wide-angle photograph of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California. The bridge's iconic red-orange structure spans the water, with its suspension cables and towers clearly visible. The water is a deep blue-green, and several small white sailboats are scattered across the surface. In the background, the city of San Francisco is visible on the hills under a sky with soft, grey clouds. A solid blue horizontal band is superimposed over the top portion of the image, containing white text.

# Building a Diversity Advantage as the key to a High-Performance Product Team

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# About Me

**VP Products @ Visa**  in SF 

**Visa Checkout 30M users, 25 Countries**

**Building Online digital products since 1997**

**A working parent in a two career household**



# Disclaimers

- This is a work in progress
- Questions are welcome
- Feedback is welcome
- Be kind 'yes and' not 'yes, but'
- I'm speaking to you from a perspective of privilege
- Much of my own personal experience has been on 'easy mode'
- It's (well past) time for people like me to get woke to diversity

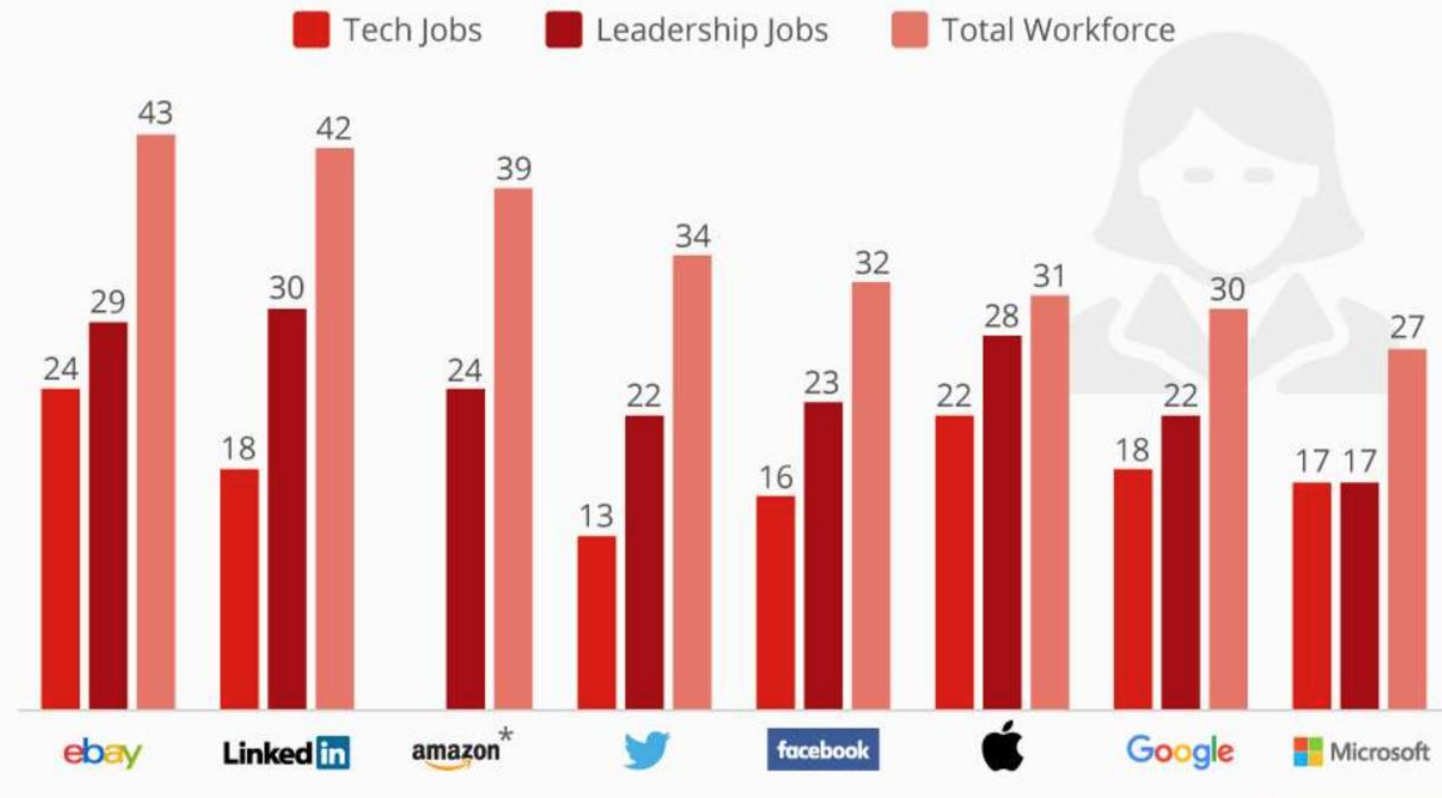
Secret: great products are made of people



# Why don't our product teams look like our products' users?

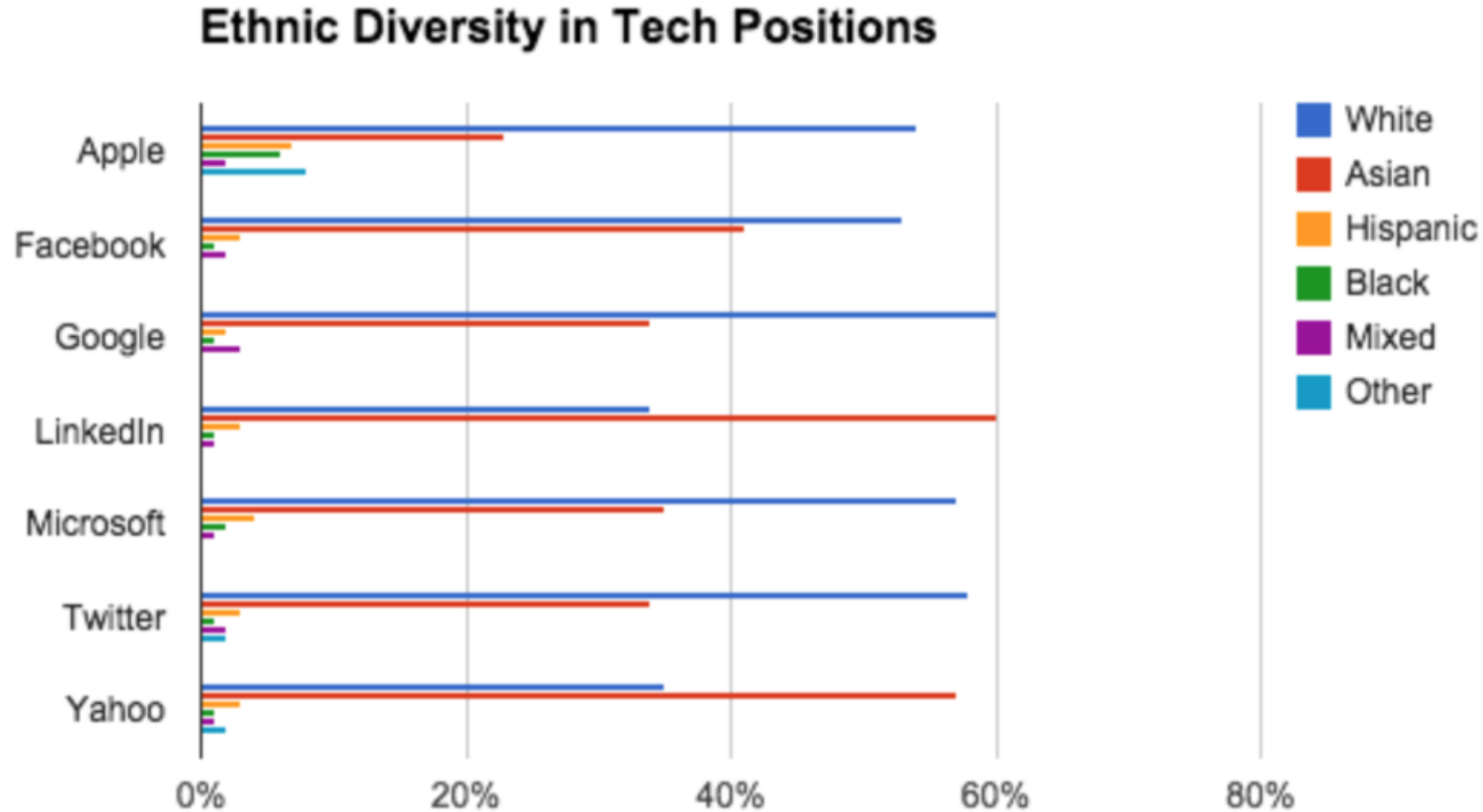
## The State of Women in Tech

Percentage of female employees in the workforce of major tech companies



Source: @Statisticacharts metrics from company reports

# Why don't our product teams look like our products' users?





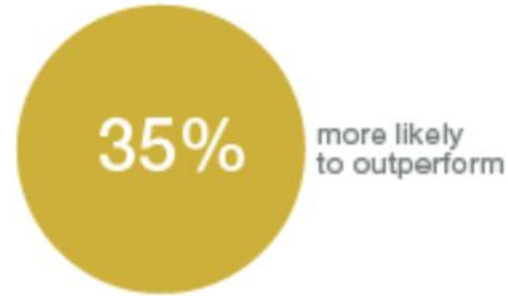
# Empirically, we know diversity works so why are we failing?

## Diversity's dividend

What's the likelihood that companies in the top quartile for diversity financially outperform those in the bottom quartile?<sup>1</sup>



Gender-diverse companies



Ethnically diverse companies

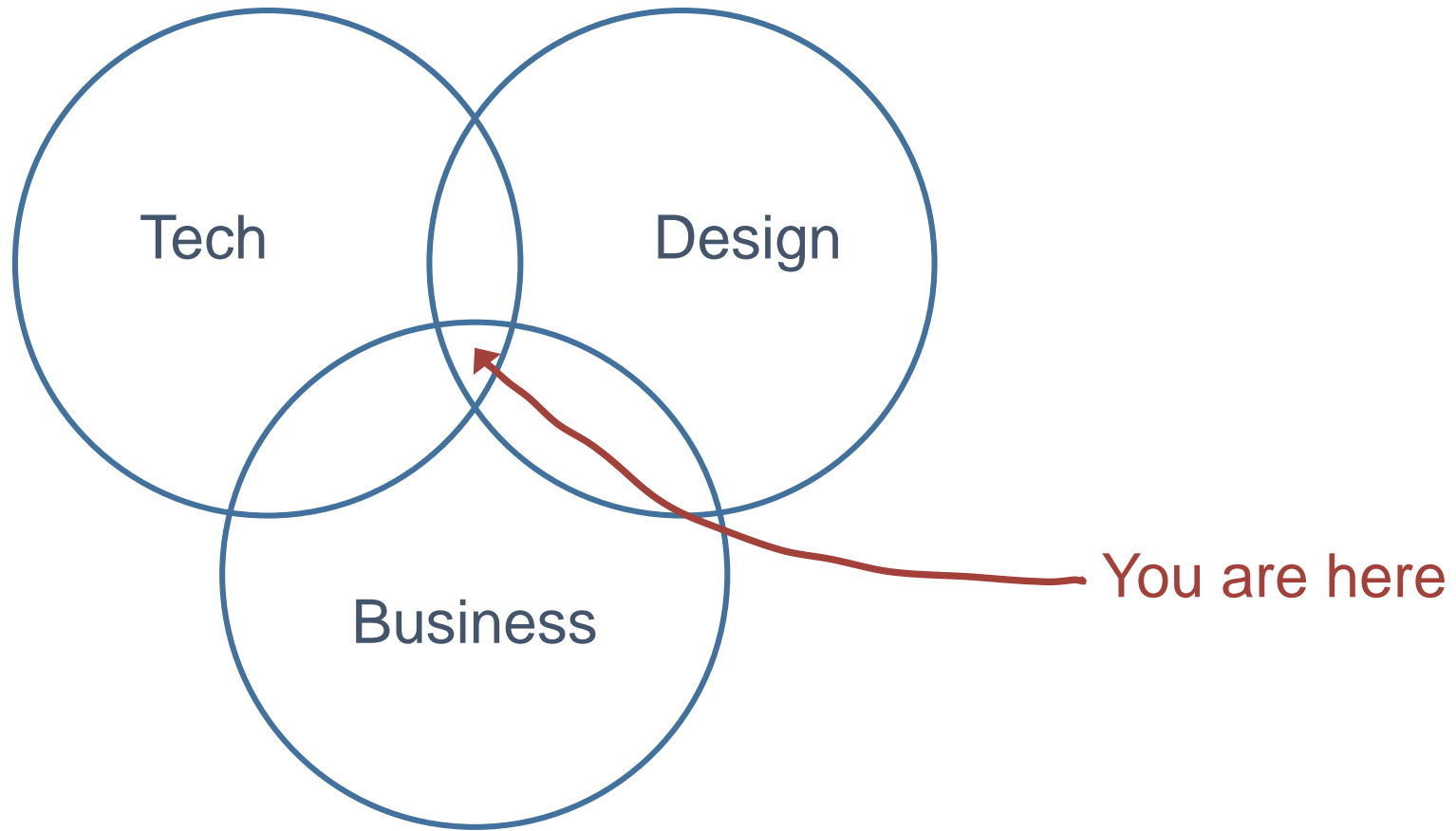
<sup>1</sup>Results show likelihood of financial performance above the national industry median. Analysis is based on composite data for all countries in the data set. Results vary by individual country.

Source: McKinsey analysis

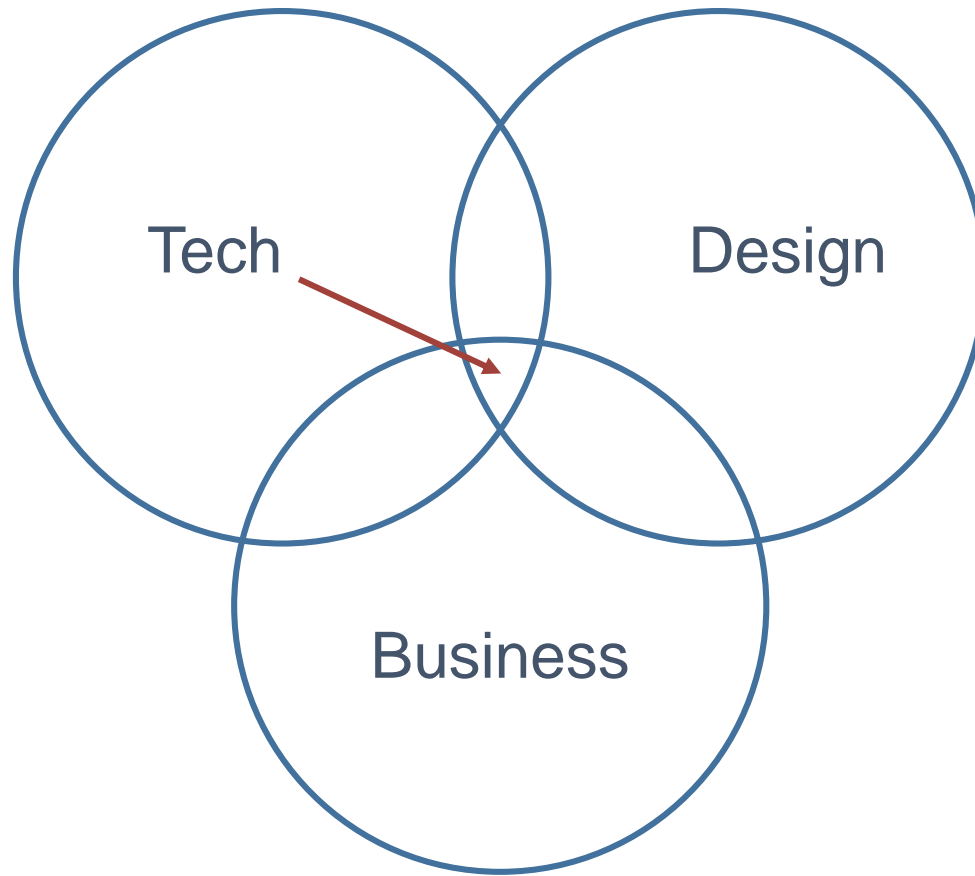
What *should* product organizations look like?



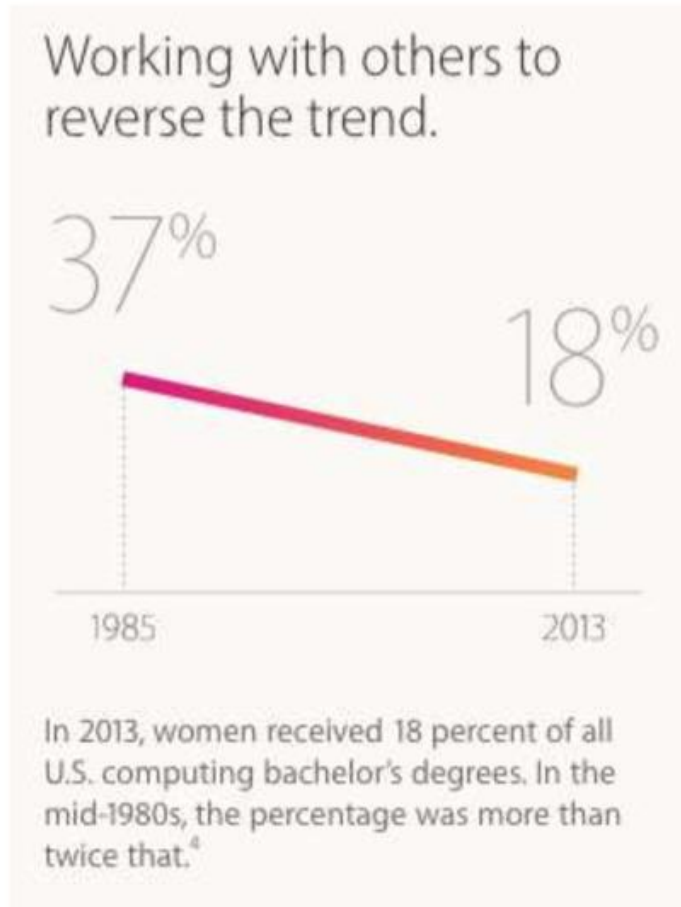
# Common View of Product Management



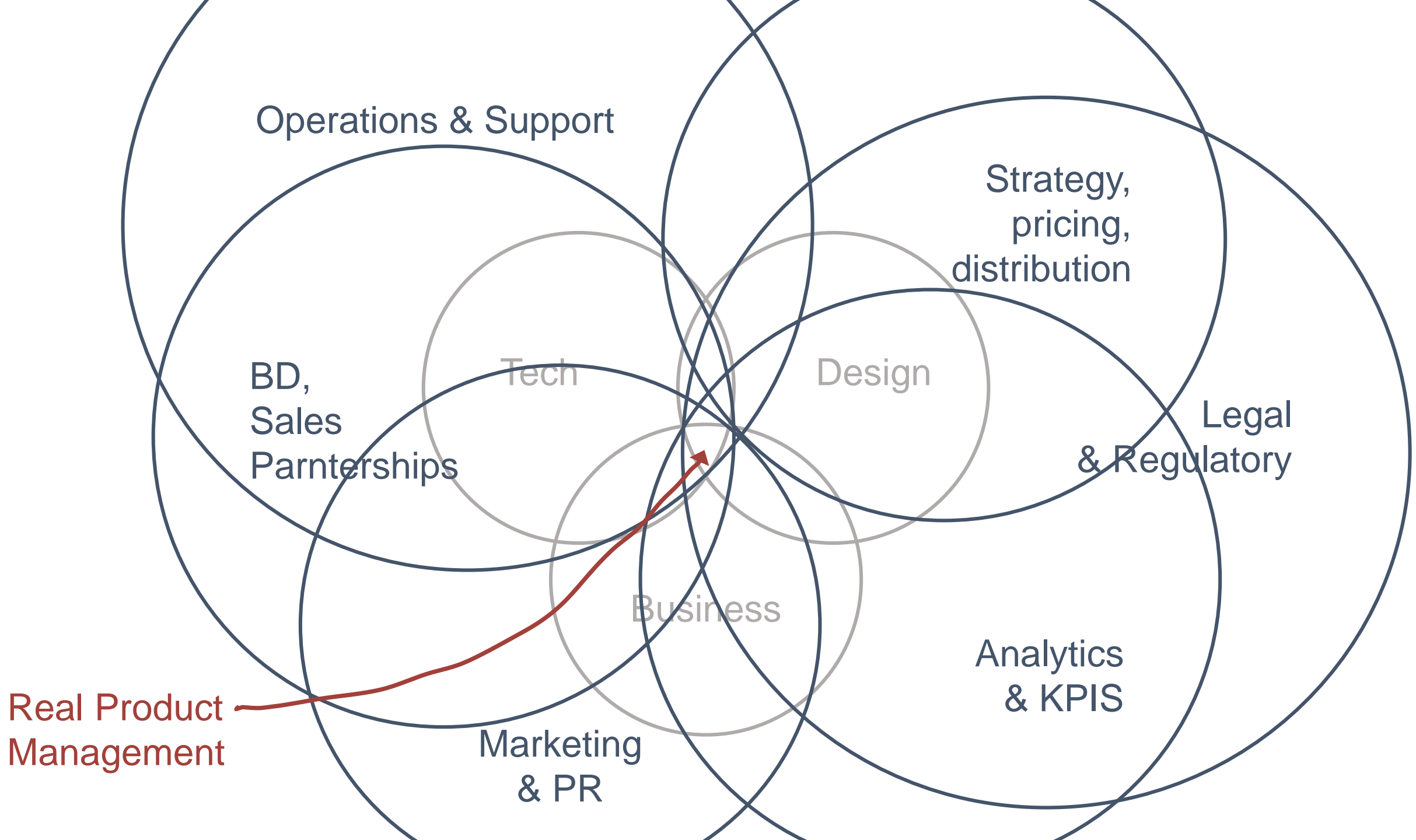
# Default career funnel at many tech companies



# But Wait...



Source: Apple Diversity





What it feels like to product manage some days

Reality: there is no Superman product manager



# An effective product leadership means recruiting for balanced and diverse superpowers

1. **Results oriented**
2. **Growth mindset**
3. **Empathy skills**
4. **Passionate about the product**
5. Persuasive and diplomatic
6. Analytical and quantitative
7. Creative and imaginative
8. Technical literacy
9. Domain experts
10. Strategic dreamers
11. Detailed do-ers
12. Differentiated perspectives
13. Complimentary skillsets





# It's time to disrupt the old talent pipelines

Talent is everywhere, yet the tech industry has tended to disproportionately reward and competes for a narrower few.

- Pervasive biases barriers in the workplace
- At senior levels, the legacy of decades of historical bias in promotions and advancement

There's long been market failure of rewarding diverse talent & leadership - disruptive solutions for this gap can create long term sustainable advantage

# Building a competitive diversity advantage

1. Recognizing systemic and unconscious bias in the workplace
2. Open your funnel. Break down and change your recruiting practices to attract diverse talent – or your competitors will
3. Promote, mentor and cross-train
4. Flexible work arrangements as an underutilized tool
5. Final takeaways: simple everyday ally skills

**YOU are biased.**



**(So am I.)**

**It matters.**

Source: Unconscious Bias @ Work | Google Ventures

# Challenge your own bias

Think about who you go to when

- Someone to take notes or organize a team offsite
- Someone to take the lead on a difficult or important stretch goal

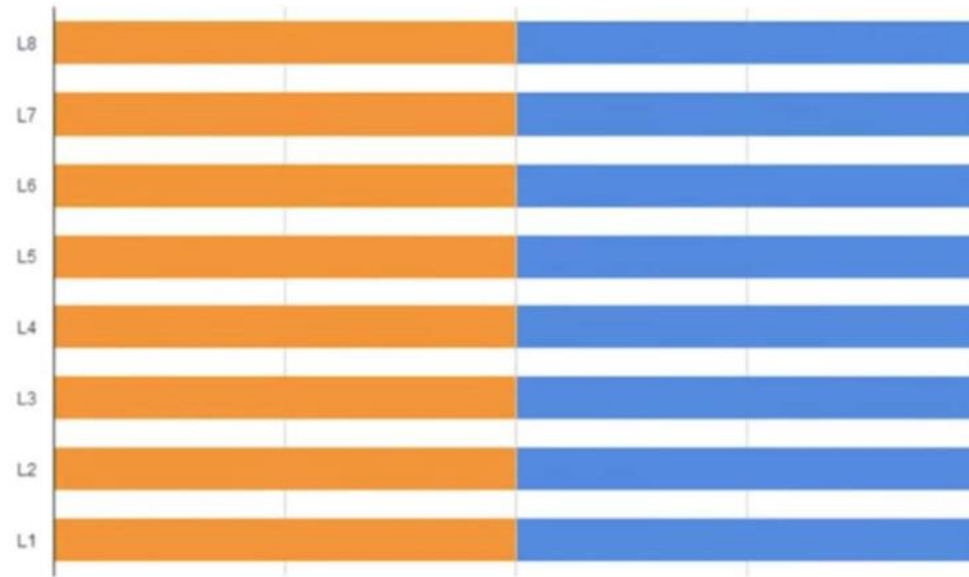
Hold yourself accountable

- Question your first impressions
- Justify your decisions
- Ask for feedback

## 2. How are you hiring?

1. The language of your job postings matters
2. Look outside 'traditional' career backgrounds
3. Build a diverse recruiting network
4. Beware traps of hiring for 'culture' and sameness

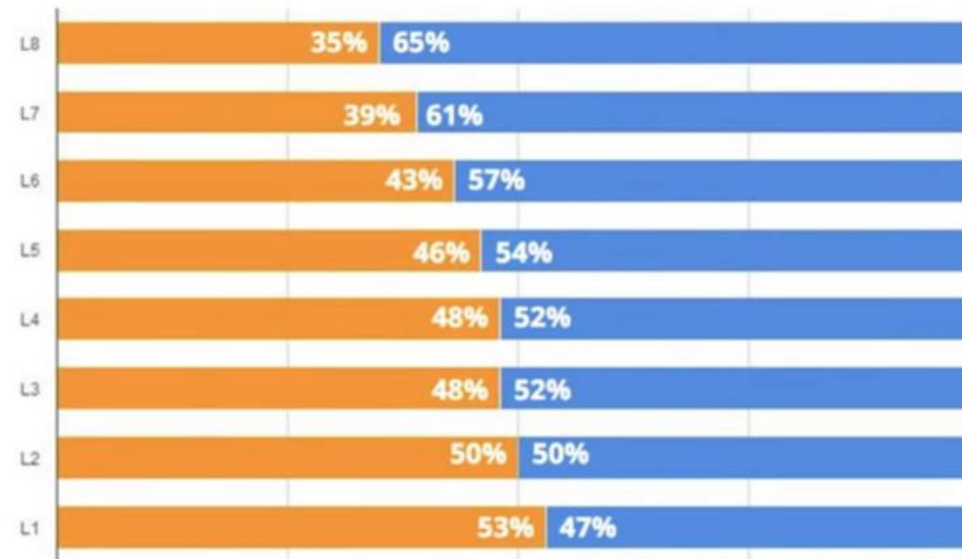
**With 1% variance** in performance scores...



Source: Unconscious Bias @ Work | Google Ventures



...**only 35%** of level 8 employees would be orange.



Source: Unconscious Bias @ Work | Google Ventures

# Have privilege? Be a better ally



Amplification



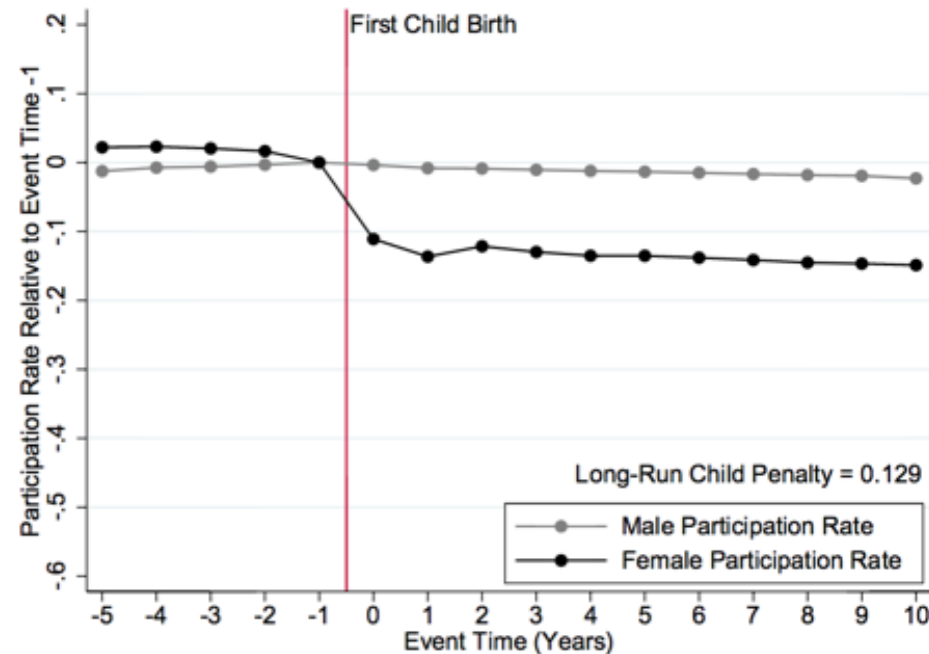
Advocacy and Sponsorship

# Everyday ally strategies

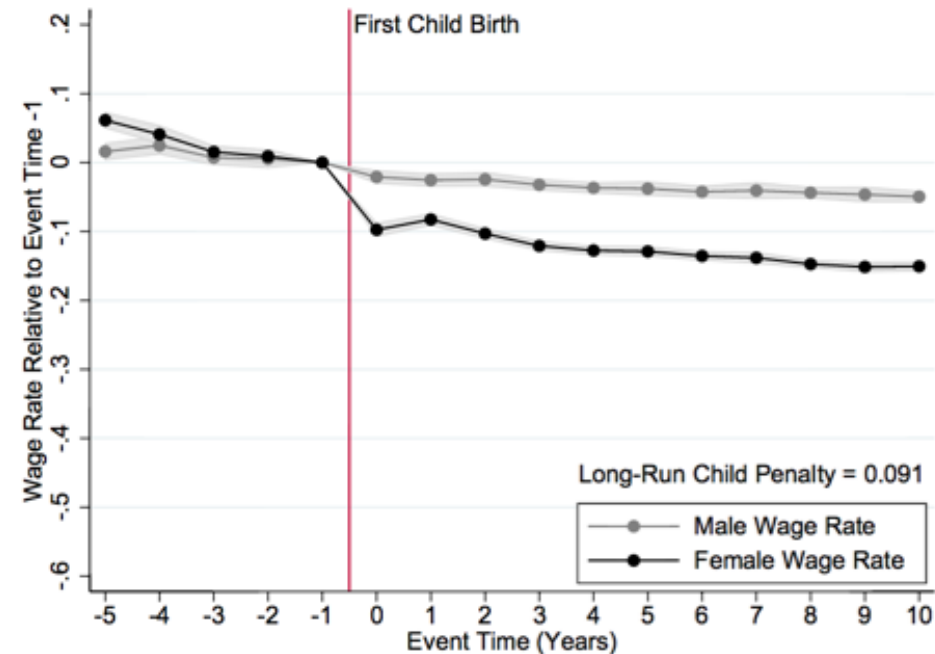
- Create and offer leadership opportunities
  - Something that would deliver a win for the product or solve a longstanding problem
  - Independent of title, role and day-to-day responsibility
  - Likely to require lateral leadership and collaboration
  - Solution can be uncertain
  - Success can be uncertain
- When promoting, Take a chance on women and diversity

# One a stark remaining gap: starting a family

**C: Participation Rates**

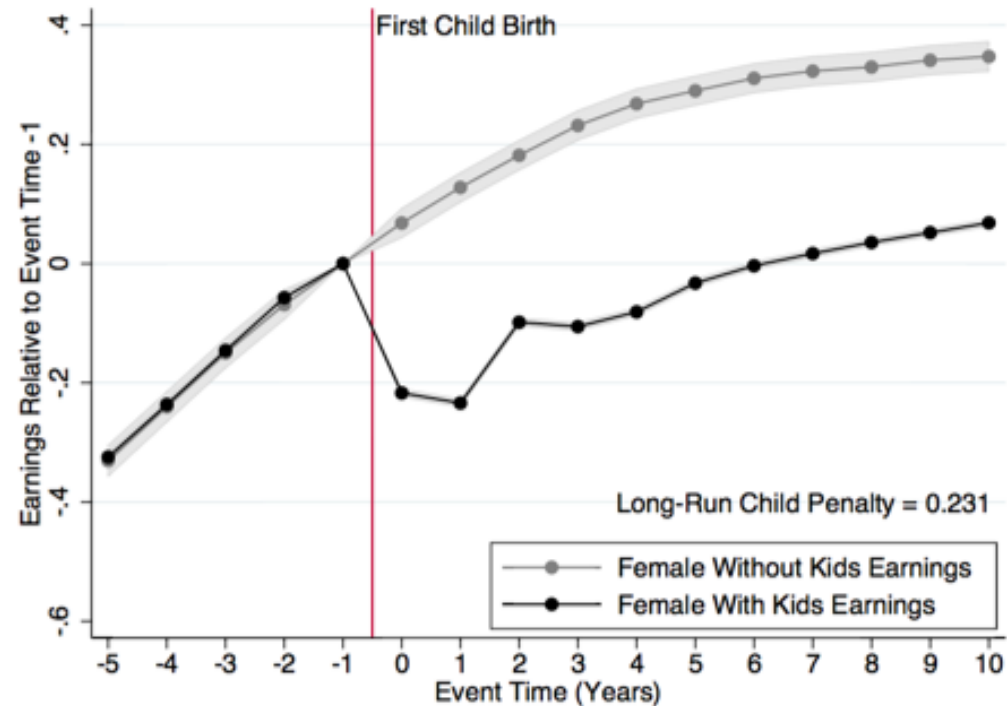


**D: Wage Rates**

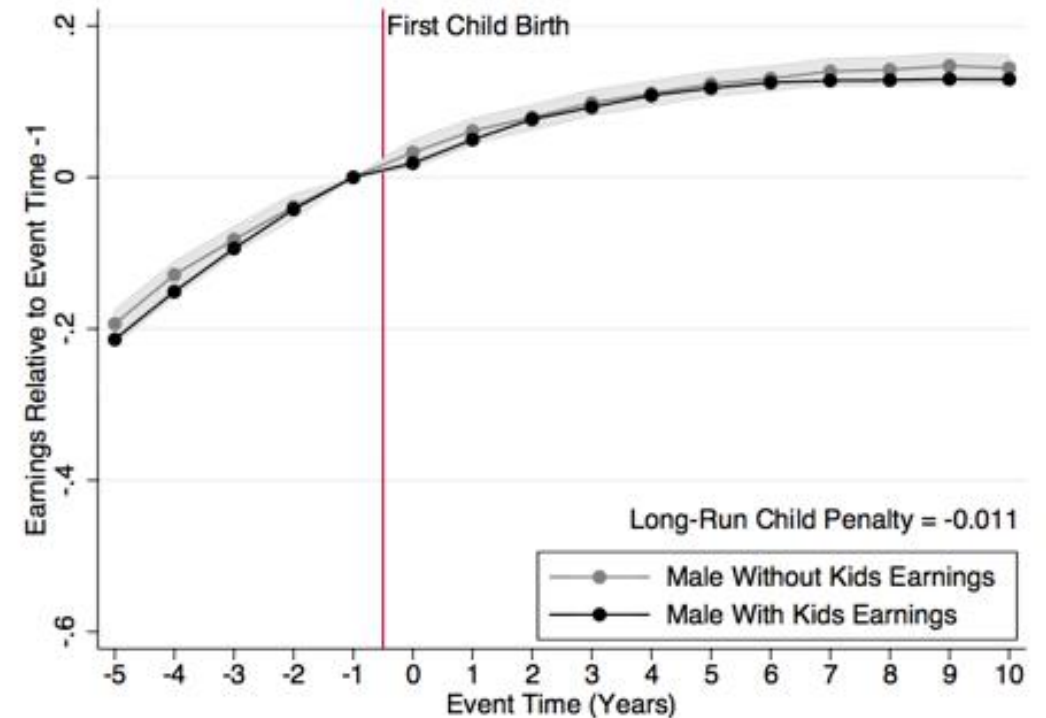


# Angry yet?

**A: Women Who Have Children vs Women Who Don't**  
Earnings Impact



**B: Men Who Have Children vs Men Who Don't**  
Earnings Impact





Product people, we should also be seeing stark market gaps a clear business case for innovation. This is *what we do*.



# Fractional Jobs – one modest proposal

- Create an internal programs for fractional roles 50%, 60%, 80% etc.
- As a manager, gives me access to more flexible team structures
- Tap into and retain people that (for many life situations) might otherwise be dropping out of the workforce
- Destigmatize part time roles. Having a baby should not be considered a disability.
- Especially for new families, 60 or 80% schedules, can allow partners to set and share share worklife balance
- Hidden benefits: allowing mix-and match combinations can give individuals unique opportunities to cross-train, network and maximize their value across an organization

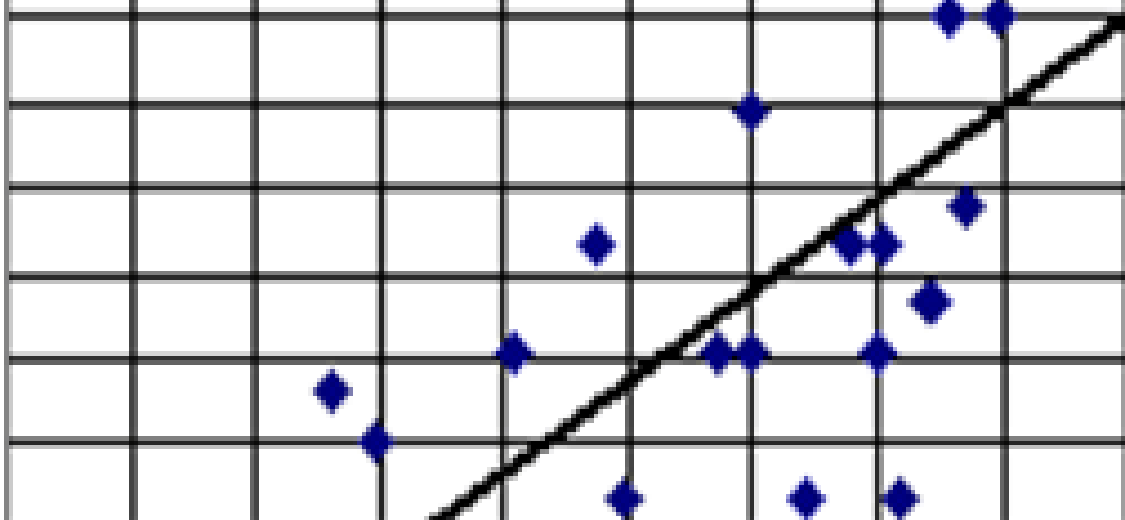


# Manage your diversity advantage like you manage any product

1. Be agile, learn, improve, iterate and repeat
2. Measure diversity kpis
3. Be results-oriented not just activity-focused
4. Be empathetic
5. Always be learning
6. Mind the gaps



axis



Questions?

